

KENYON COLLEGE

Vice President for Enrollment and Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid

Position Description

2014

“Bringing together diverse and talented populations of students and faculty into a dynamic learning community; challenging students with a rigorous broad education; sharpening their creativity and leadership outside of the classroom – these are all mechanisms by which Kenyon acts as a catalyst for transforming student lives.

But what happens after graduation? How do we think about the lasting effects of the transformational power of the Kenyon experience, not just on individual students but on society as a whole?

While Kenyon works to catalyze change in its students, the graduates of Kenyon College are catalysts themselves, transforming the world around them. While on this Hill, Kenyon students form bonds with place and peers. From this Hill, Kenyon graduates engage in a different type of bond formation. They build businesses, create great works of art, generate new knowledge in the laboratory, improve lives through the practice of medicine, reshape national policy, and work to solve global problems. Equipped with the skills from four years at Kenyon, our graduates challenge convention and conventional thinking; ask hard questions; and push their colleagues to succeed.

The compelling nature of this awesome power of Kenyon—the power to transform individuals who then go on to transform the world—is what brought me here to this Hill in Gambier. The work ahead—not just the work for me, but the work for all of us who care deeply about this place—is to ensure that this powerful institution endures.”

--excerpt from [President Sean M. Decatur’s Inauguration Address](#)
Kenyon College, October 26, 2013

THE POSITION

Kenyon College, one of the nation’s preeminent liberal arts colleges, invites applications and nominations for the position of Vice President for Enrollment and Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid. Reporting to the President and overseeing a staff of thirty, the Vice President will serve as a key member of the leadership team that sets the strategic direction for the College. This is an outstanding opportunity to partner with new President Dr. Sean Decatur, who stands as a celebrated champion of the liberal arts. The new Vice President for enrollment at Kenyon will be following Jennifer Delahunty, a nationally-recognized enrollment leader, who is stepping down as Vice President to become the College’s West Coast representative.

Kenyon College is in a position of strength, with greater name recognition, more diverse and academically talented students and 44 consecutive years of operating budget surpluses. The new Vice President for Enrollment and Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid will be charged with examining the results of this success—including an elevated market position—building on effective methods, and developing fresh and strategic approaches to enrolling students in the coming years.

Lahti Search Consultants is assisting Kenyon College with this search. Information on how to apply or submit nominations can be found at the end of this position profile.

KENYON COLLEGE

Background

Founded in 1824, Kenyon is the oldest private college in Ohio. The small, all-male college originally educated clergymen for frontier America. But it soon became a highly regarded seat of classical education, whose graduates included statesmen such as U.S. President Rutherford B. Hayes. The College's literary prominence dates to 1939, when poet and critic John Crowe Ransom founded the [Kenyon Review](#). Since then, Kenyon has grown in size—welcoming women in 1969—and has expanded intellectually, earning national recognition in many fields. Enrollment now stands at 1,650 students. Well-known alumni include not only a host of eminent writers, but also actors, scientists, educators, artists and leaders in business and the professions.

Students

Kenyon students are curious, creative, and intrigued by the opportunity to live and learn in a mutually supportive intellectual environment, what a former President called "learning in the company of friends." They're innovative, self-motivated, tolerant, and talented. Above all, they love to learn. Current Kenyon students represent 49 states and 44 foreign countries; 47 percent are male, 53 percent are female; and the percentage of domestic students of color has more than doubled since 2003, rising to 20 percent of the last enrolling class. The average reported GPA of incoming students is typically 3.90. Under Delahunty's leadership, the College received a record 6,635 applications for the Class of 2018 and extended 1,631 offers, resulting in a highly selective 25 percent acceptance rate. The creation of an international recruiting program has led to unprecedented global reach, with offers of admission this year to 96 students in 45 countries. One faculty member described Kenyon students as "happy overachievers" who manage to balance their academic goals with involvement in their community. Another faculty member adds, "And they are just genuinely nice people." The admissions staff takes delight in what they call students' "intellectual playfulness." Students are also very satisfied with their experience, as evidenced by Kenyon's four-year graduation rate of 89 percent, the highest of any college in Ohio, and one of the highest in the nation.

Faculty and Programs

“Teachers, mentors, friends”—that’s the way generations of Kenyon students sum up the role their professors have played in their lives. The faculty is Kenyon's greatest strength, comprised of accomplished scholars whose top priority is to engage students and challenge them intellectually in ways that help them thrive. With 200 faculty members and a 10-to-1 student-faculty ratio, professors work closely with students in and out of the classroom and lab. Ninety-nine percent of Kenyon’s tenure-track faculty members hold a Ph.D. or other terminal degree in their field. There are 35 majors leading to a bachelor's degree. In addition, the College offers 13 concentrations; pre-professional advising for graduate or professional school in business, education, engineering, law, and medicine; and a number of cooperative programs involving other institutions. For more information on Kenyon’s faculty, academic programs and opportunities for students, visit <http://www.kenyon.edu/academics/>.

Kenyon is also home to several well-known centers and special programs, including:

[Brown Family Environmental Center](#): Research and recreation happily coexist in this 480-acre nature preserve, which encompasses forest, prairie, and wetland habitats near the Kokosing River. The lands include eight miles of scenic hiking trails as well as tranquil gardens, and ample space for students to enjoy campfires and star-gazing.

[Center for Global Engagement](#): This is the hub for Kenyon students planning to study abroad and for international students from 44 countries. Besides advising students on more than 150 available study-abroad programs, the staff works with student groups to plan international celebrations and festive meals.

[Center for the Study of American Democracy](#): Leading policy-makers, political figures, journalists, and scholars regularly visit campus through this center, promoting nuanced debate on pressing issues. Students help run center programs, including a major biennial symposium. The center also connects students to internship and job opportunities in government.

[Rural Life Center](#): Through classwork and research, the Rural Life Center immerses students in Knox County life with the aim of sustaining rural vitality. Students create award-winning exhibitions, radio series, and books, while forming fast friendships with local residents. They also work with area farmers on Kenyon’s extensive local-food program.

[Gund Gallery](#): With the help of student associates, the gallery—a stunning new building in the heart of campus—hosts exhibitions of contemporary art, along with film series, talks, and performances. There’s always something surprising and provocative in the Gund, including the annual senior art show.

[The Kenyon Review](#): Student associates and interns read manuscripts, interview visiting authors, and plan readings as part of their work for Kenyon's internationally renowned literary journal. The Review, which includes extensive online offerings, also organizes an annual literary festival on campus, as well as summer writing workshops and contests.

[Kenyon Academic Partnership](#) (KAP) is an early college program in which 32 central and northern Ohio public and independent secondary schools offer various Kenyon College introductory level courses on their own campuses. The program not only permits students to earn college placement and credit before leaving high school but imitates as closely as possible a college environment in the nature and scope of reading, writing, and laboratory assignments, and the process or atmosphere of a college class.

Athletics

Kenyon has a long history of athletic participation and achievement. Approximately 30 percent of Kenyon's student body participates in varsity athletics, while nearly 35 percent of the student body participates in intramural competition. The Kenyon Lords and Ladies compete in 22 intercollegiate sports—11 women's and 11 men's—in the North Coast Athletic Conference. Especially noteworthy: Kenyon leads all NCAA Division III institutions with a total of 59 national championships and ranks second with 65 NCAA Postgraduate Scholarship award-winners.

Admissions and Financial Aid

The admissions process at Kenyon is very personal and the staff attempts to get to know each applicant as an individual, even creating customized visits for prospective students. Staff members characterize themselves as taking their work seriously, but not themselves. For the freshman class entering Fall 2014, there were a record-setting 6,635 applicants, of whom 1,631 (25 percent) were admitted. To see a detailed class profile, visit <http://www.kenyon.edu/admissions-aid/admissions-statistics/>

Kenyon College meets 100 percent of demonstrated financial need of admitted students, as determined by the FAFSA and CSS Profile, for all four years. (Note that students enrolling from the wait list are not guaranteed financial aid.) In fall 2013, 65 percent of students received financial assistance in the form of need-based aid, merit scholarships, or a combination of the two. In 2007, Kenyon alumnus Paul Newman '49 and his Newman's Own Foundation donated \$10 million to support annual loan-free scholarships to deserving students who otherwise would not be able to attend Kenyon. For the 2014-15 academic year, tuition and fees are \$47,330; room and board are \$11,560. The discount rate is budgeted at 35 percent.

The Campus

The special character of the Kenyon experience is deeply tied to the College's extraordinary natural environment. Kenyon's beautiful 1,000-acre hilltop campus in Gambier, Ohio, includes a 480-acre nature preserve and is recognized as one of the most beautiful college campuses in

the world. [Take a virtual tour of Kenyon](#). One administrator observed, “Because of our setting, our energy goes into our community rather than dispersing it outward into an urban setting.” When city life calls, however, the state’s capital of Columbus is just 45 miles away.

A few of Kenyon’s noteworthy facilities:

Art: The Gund Gallery is home to the Department of Art History and to more than 6,000 square feet of exhibition space. Horvitz Hall is filled with light, spacious studios and superb technology for media ranging from drawing and painting to digital and video art.

Dining: Peirce Hall is home to one of Kenyon’s signature spaces, the Great Hall, with carved rafters and stained-glass windows. Kenyon leads the nation in farm-to-college programs and the recent \$28 million renovation of Peirce Hall created space for a variety of food stations and more extensive use of local farm products.

Fitness: With its top-flight facilities and spectacular architecture, the 263,000 square foot Kenyon Athletic Center, or “KAC,” is a favorite place to work out and hang out. It’s large enough to accommodate varsity teams, intramurals and individual users simultaneously.

Music: The center of musical activity on campus is Rosse Hall, a Greek Revival landmark that has been renovated to house a 650-seat concert hall. Attached to Rosse is Storer Hall, with a 135-seat recital hall, reception area, rehearsal and seminar rooms.

Science: Kenyon’s science buildings provide spacious, well-equipped labs for classes and student research, along with modern, technology-rich lecture halls.

Theater and Dance: Productions in drama and dance take place in Bolton Theater, a modern 389-seat theater with a thrust stage and ample backstage and technical capabilities. Hill Theater seats 186 and hosts a busy schedule of student productions.

Financial Resources

The market value of Kenyon’s endowment as of June 30, 2014 was \$202 million. Kenyon College has operated with a budget surplus for 44 consecutive years. At the core of this fiscal winning streak is responsibility, discipline and a commitment to keeping Kenyon strong. One administrator recently noted, “We try to take meaningful, purposeful steps toward our goals.”

The President

[Sean M. Decatur](#) became the 19th President of Kenyon College on July 1, 2013. He arrived at Kenyon after serving since July 2008 as the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Oberlin College. He was also a professor of chemistry and biochemistry at Oberlin. He earned a bachelor's degree at Swarthmore College and a doctorate in biophysical chemistry at Stanford University in 1995.

Decatur joined the faculty at Mount Holyoke College in 1995 as an assistant professor of chemistry. As an associate professor of chemistry, he served as department chair from 2001-04. In 2005, he was appointed the Marilyn Dawson Sarles Professor of Life Sciences. He was also an associate dean of faculty for science from 2005-08. On the faculty at Mount Holyoke, Decatur won research grants from the National Science Foundation and National Institutes of Health and from private foundations including the Alzheimer's Association, Dreyfus Foundation, and Research Corporation for Science Advancement. He is the author of numerous scholarly articles and has received a number of national awards for his scholarship, including a National Science Foundation CAREER award in 1999 and a Henry Dreyfus Teacher-Scholar Award in 2003. He was named an Emerging Scholar of 2007 by *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education* magazine.

Decatur is a strong advocate for liberal education, and he has contributed to the discussions on this topic to the *New York Times* Room for Debate commentary forum and other venues. He tweets and blogs regularly <http://blogs.kenyon.edu/notes-from-ransom-hall-a-higher-ed-blog/> on topics large and small. The Kenyon College community has already come to enjoy President Decatur's warm and playful side, some of which is chronicled here during his first year at Kenyon: <http://www.kenyon.edu/middle-path/story/year-one-in-review/>.

Decatur is married to Renee Romano, professor of history and African American Studies at Oberlin College. Romano is a specialist in 20th century American history, with research interests in African American history, civil rights, and historical memory. They have two children, Sabine and Owen.

GAMBIER AND COLUMBUS, OHIO

For those who know Gambier, the name conjures up images of a lively and lovely setting and a caring and close-knit community. Named for Lord James Gambier, the village was founded by Philander Chase, who also founded the institution at its core, Kenyon College. With Kenyon's Middle Path serving as the village's main pedestrian artery, students, faculty, staff and other Gambier residents get to know each other as citizens of this unique community.

Community members tend to love the outdoors and take full advantage of the Kokosing Gap Trail, a fourteen-mile Rails-to-Trails path that passes over Kokosing River bridges and runs through Knox County fields and forest, with a major entrance point in Gambier.

Less than an hour away from this idyllic rural setting is the vibrant city of Columbus, with its festivals, universities, cultural activities, shops and restaurants. With a population of 850,000, Columbus is the capital of and largest city in Ohio. For more information, visit <http://www.experiencecolumbus.com/>.

OPPORTUNITIES AND PRIORITIES

Following are some of the key opportunities and likely priorities for the new Vice President:

Develop a clear understanding of the Kenyon campus culture and community values; build informal relationships as well as practical bridges with people and offices across campus.

Explore, absorb and enjoy Kenyon College and the local area by being an active and visible participant.

Work with others across campus to clearly articulate the value and power of a liberal arts education at Kenyon College. Assert why a Kenyon education matters and what impact it has not only on the lives of Kenyon students and alumni, but also the world that they transform. Be a national voice and regular presence externally on behalf of the College.

Research and evaluate Kenyon's current market position and demand curve. Adjust marketing and messaging to take into account a new, more selective competitor set in student recruitment. Effectively use Kenyon's points of distinction to stand out in a competitive academic marketplace. Be bold and creative in addressing new market challenges.

Recruit and enroll even greater numbers of high-achieving students of outstanding potential from all backgrounds. Put forward a vision and plan focused on enrolling students with diverse world views, socio-economic means, racial and ethnic backgrounds, political perspectives, cultural backgrounds and other types of diversity. Continue to capitalize on the Kenyon Academic Partnership (KAP), an early college partnership program that admissions has successfully used to create pipelines of underrepresented minority, first-generation, and economically disadvantaged students.

Identify emerging geographic regions, including international possibilities, for attracting new students. Ohio, New York and Chicago have been traditional strongholds for Kenyon; in recent years California has emerged as the second largest state for applicants and enrolled students. Determine how to best use limited resources to identify, attract and enroll students from new domestic and international sources.

Encourage a culture of evidence and data-based decision-making, coupled with a holistic approach to admissions decisions.

Actively seek out opportunities to showcase Kenyon College, nationally and internationally, to continue to enhance the College's visibility and reputation.

Play an active role in campus-wide discussions regarding academic quality, wide-ranging diversity, net revenue and financial sustainability. Be aware of national and international trends—and what may be on the horizon—and provide information and perspective for such discussions.

Evaluate Kenyon’s financial aid packaging and leveraging strategies. Think creatively about how to navigate rising discount rates and declining family resources—and how all of this plays in the context of limited institutional resources.

Assess current operations in the offices of admissions and financial aid; suggest ways to bring staff and systems together to streamline work and find efficiencies. Explore strategies and best practices for effectively managing a significantly larger number of applications.

Manage, lead, inspire and motivate staff members. Introduce new ideas and be open to the ideas of others. Provide constructive criticism and positive feedback. Show empathy and compassion, especially during stressful times.

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS, EXPERIENCE, AND PERSONAL QUALITIES

Candidates for this position should have a deep understanding of and passion for the liberal arts and be able to articulate the value of Kenyon College to prospective students and families, college counselors and other influencers.

The ideal candidate should have a leadership style that is humane and results-oriented; innovative and diplomatic; and mission-driven and data-guided. He or she should have a record of success in shaping the academic and diversity profile of entering classes. Experience in marketing, financial aid, and selective college admissions are desirable. A successful balance between on-campus presence and national involvement is expected to evolve.

Kenyon seeks candidates who have:

- A record of successful leadership and management
- Imagination and fresh ideas
- The ability to invest resources wisely
- Marketing sensibilities
- High standards and a strong work ethic
- A community versus corporate approach
- An understanding of NCAA Division III athletics
- The ability to build, motivate and inspire staff
- Grace under pressure

Kenyon also hopes to attract an enrollment professional who is:

- Adaptable
- An effective communicator
- Data-oriented
- Collaborative, transparent and inclusive
- A good listener
- Well-connected, well-networked

- A good mentor
- Media-savvy
- Comfortable with technology
- Creative and opportunistic
- Solution-oriented

An advanced degree is preferred. A sense of humor and resilience are required.

TO APPLY OR TO NOMINATE CANDIDATES

Lahti Search Consultants (www.lahtisearch.com) is assisting Kenyon College with this search for a Vice President for Enrollment and Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid. If you wish to have a confidential conversation about this opportunity or nominate someone for this position, please contact: Terry Lahti, terry@lahtisearch.com or Richard Cook, richard@lahtisearch.com. Resumes will be reviewed beginning October 1 and will continue until the position is filled. If you wish to apply, please submit a resume and letter of interest to kenyon@lahtisearch.com.

For more information about Kenyon College, visit www.kenyon.edu.

An Equal Opportunity Employer, Kenyon is committed to building a diverse faculty, staff and administration.