The University of Texas at Austin
College of Liberal Arts

Dean
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The Opportunity

One hundred fifty years ago, the Texas Constitution mandated the creation of "a University of the first class for the promotion of literature and the arts and sciences." This call inspires the University of Texas at Austin's College of Liberal Arts. The University (UT Austin) invites applications and nominations for the position of **Dean of the College of Liberal Arts (COLA)**, one of UT Austin's largest colleges and a national leader in humanities and social science education and research. COLA's 21 departments and more than 30 centers and institutes teach students to think critically, communicate effectively, and engage thoughtfully with complex social, political, and ethical questions. Across these fields, the College's faculty produce research that advances the frontiers of knowledge and understanding while also preparing our graduates to pursue lives of meaning, impact, and leadership. These are timeless missions that have fresh urgency in our current age of rapid technological change, and the College has a special role to play in meeting that challenge. As President Jim Davis said in his inaugural address, "In a world of growing artificial intelligence, there has never been a more important time to develop human intelligence."

The search welcomes candidates with distinguished academic and professional backgrounds who can lead a large and multifaceted college at an AAU research university during a pivotal moment for the humanities and social sciences in American higher education.

Leadership Overview

The Dean of COLA serves as the College's chief academic and administrative officer, providing strategic, intellectual, and operational leadership for the college. Reporting to the Executive Vice President and Provost, the Dean guides the academic enterprise across undergraduate and graduate programs.

The Dean is responsible for equipping all faculty, students, and staff to thrive; recruiting and retaining outstanding scholars and educators; and ensuring that academic programs meet the highest standards of rigor, relevance, and innovation, warranting the public's trust in our enterprise. The Dean oversees the College's budget

and operations, helps develop new academic initiatives, and strengthens the infrastructure required for high-impact research, high-quality teaching, and student success. Direct reports typically include associate deans for academic/faculty affairs, student affairs, research, and graduate education; an assistant dean for finance and administration; the College's chief development officer; and department chairs across the College's 21 departments.

As the external representative of the College, the Dean serves as an ambassador to state leaders and agencies, alumni, donors, and community, industry, and government partners. The Dean leads in securing philanthropic support and expanding the College's visibility, influence, and contributions to Texas and the nation.

This is a significant opportunity: the College has operated under interim leadership for an extended period following the completion of the previous dean's term in 2025, and the next Dean will provide the sustained, permanent leadership needed to build on the College's strengths and chart its next chapter.

Major Priorities and Characteristics Sought in the Next Dean

Visionary, Future-Oriented Leadership

The successful candidate will bring visionary leadership grounded in a deep understanding of the evolving role of the humanities and social sciences in higher education and society. UT Austin is building a new undergraduate Core Curriculum—a clear, focused, and rigorous program of general education organized around three categories: Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, and STEM—designed to ensure that every student shares a common and balanced learning experience and grapples with big questions of human meaning and purpose, citizenship and self-government, scientific discovery, and the opportunities and challenges of technological innovation. With courses in the new Core beginning fall 2027 for approximately 10,000 students a year, COLA's departments—spanning both the Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences categories—will be central to its success. The Dean will play an important role in shaping and implementing the Core, while influencing broader national conversations about the value and relevance of a liberal arts education. The Dean should also ensure that COLA's disciplines build the judgment, character, and capacity for lifelong learning that are essential in a world where information is abundant, but wisdom is scarce.

Commitment to Student Success and Career Readiness

The successful candidate will be committed to student success and to preparing COLA's more than 12,000 undergraduate students and more than 1100 graduate students for meaningful careers and civic life–preparation that extends to the tens of thousands of students from other academic units at UT who take COLA classes. This leader will champion student interests and expand opportunities for research, internships, and experiential learning, ensuring that a liberal arts education translates clearly into career readiness whether in the public, private, or third sectors. The Dean

will support curricular innovation, including through the College's honors and interdisciplinary programs, to ensure students graduate with both deep knowledge and adaptable, transferable skills.

Faculty Excellence, Recruitment, and a Thriving Academic Community

The successful candidate will be committed to building and sustaining an exceptional faculty community across COLA's wide-ranging departments. This leader will recruit and retain outstanding scholars and teachers; develop and maintain high standards for hiring, promotion, and tenure; and ensure that faculty and staff can flourish in their work. Following a period of reorganization within the College, including the recent consolidation of several departments, the Dean will foster a culture of collaboration and shared purpose across the College's diverse fields.

Resource Development, External Relations, and Institutional Advocacy

The successful candidate will demonstrate a strong capacity for fundraising, external relations, and advocacy in support of the College's mission and strategic priorities. As UT begins preparing for the next capital campaign, the Dean will lead in cultivating relationships with donors, alumni, and community and industry partners, and in securing investments that enhance faculty excellence, student opportunities, and the College's public impact. The Dean will also champion the enduring value of a liberal arts education to state leaders, families, and the broader public.

Financial, Operational, and Organizational Leadership

The successful candidate will oversee a budget of approximately $179 million, along with the College's personnel and administrative functions, ensuring alignment with COLA's strategic priorities and the University's overall academic mission. The Dean will promote transparency, accountability, and data-informed decision-making. The Dean will also work collaboratively with faculty, staff, and university leadership to ensure prudent stewardship of the College's resources.

Support for Intellectual Freedom, Pluralism, and Academic Integrity

The successful candidate will demonstrate a strong commitment to intellectual freedom, a marketplace of ideas in and out of the classroom, and the highest standards of academic integrity. This leader will cultivate an environment where rigorous scholarship and free inquiry can thrive, and will champion a culture of intellectual pluralism and respectful dialogue—recognizing that the strength of a public research university, and of the liberal arts in particular, depends crucially on the free exchange of ideas. The Dean will help the University's broader efforts to strengthen viewpoint diversity and civic education, including with newer university-wide initiatives in this space, ensuring that COLA's departments remain vital, trusted contributors to that mission.

Interdisciplinary Opportunities and Collaborations Across the 40 Acres

The successful candidate will embrace the interdisciplinary opportunities that define both the College of Liberal Arts and The University of Texas at Austin. This leader will foster meaningful collaboration across the "40 Acres," building partnerships with many of the 17 other schools and colleges. The Dean will encourage initiatives that integrate the humanities and social sciences with fields such as data science, public policy, law, technology, and health, recognizing the increasingly interconnected nature of knowledge and practice.

Navigating Artificial Intelligence: Strategy, Pedagogy, and Mission

The successful candidate will develop a sophisticated strategy for engaging with artificial intelligence across the full scope of the College's work. This leader will leverage AI thoughtfully in the College's own administrative and operational functions, while also providing faculty with the intellectual and institutional frameworks needed to integrate AI into their research and pedagogy in ways that are rigorous and discipline-appropriate. Critically, the Dean will champion curricular and pedagogical approaches that guard against cognitive deskilling—ensuring that a COLA education continues to cultivate the deep capacities for reading, writing, reasoning, and interpretation that define the liberal arts, even as AI tools reshape how students learn and how knowledge is produced. The Dean will also be a compelling public voice for the distinctive and urgent mission of the humanities and social sciences in an AI-saturated society: articulating why the questions COLA's disciplines have always asked are not made obsolete by artificial intelligence, but made more consequential by it.

Qualifications and Experience

While no single candidate will have all of these ideal qualifications, strong candidates will demonstrate many of the following experiences and abilities:

- Academic qualifications in one or more of the College's fields, including a terminal degree and an outstanding record of academic achievement commensurate with appointment as a full professor with tenure at an AAU institution
- Understanding of research-intensive academic culture, including tenure, promotion, sponsored research, and faculty governance
- A strong record of motivational leadership and effective management in a large, complex organization, with the ability to lead diverse units
- Intellectual depth and strategic thinking; the capacity to translate ideas into actions with meaningful impact
- Demonstrated success in establishing a vision and executing a strategic plan; experience aligning resources with strategic goals
- A strong record of promoting community, civil discourse, and intellectual pluralism
- Demonstrated experience building meaningful relationships with philanthropists, institutional grant-makers, and industry partners, as well as success in securing gifts and/or establishing significant partnerships
- Financial acumen and a record of fiduciary transparency and accountability
- Exceptional communication and relationship skills and the ability to be an effective spokesperson and strong advocate for the College and University

- Demonstrated support for traditional, emerging, and converging technologies and the development of cutting-edge curricula and research programs; capacity to navigate emerging technologies–especially AI and platform shifts–with strategic and ethical judgment
- An understanding of the importance of interdisciplinary and collaborative opportunities across departments and colleges within a great university

College of Liberal Arts

The College comprises 21 departments:

Air and Space Force Science	Anthropology	Asian Studies
Classics	Economics	English
European and Eurasian Studies	Geography and the Environment	Government
History	Linguistics	Middle Eastern Studies
Military Science	Naval Science	Philosophy
Psychology	Religious Studies	Rhetoric and Writing
Social and Cultural Analysis	Sociology	Spanish and Portuguese

Across these units, COLA faculty are widely recognized for excellence in research and teaching, with numerous graduate programs ranked among the nation's best. The College also offers the Plan II Honors Program, one of the University's flagship interdisciplinary honors programs, along with more than 30 additional centers, institutes, and programs supporting research and public engagement across the social sciences.

COLA enrolls more than 12,000 undergraduate students and more than 1,000 graduate students, and employs more than 760 faculty (426 tenured, 91 tenure-track, and 246 professional track) and 550 staff. The College's alumni network includes more than 150,000 graduates worldwide.

Rankings for Selected COLA Departments and Programs

- #8 Philosophy, Philosophical Gourmet Report, 2024–25
- #8 Behavioral Neuroscience, U.S. News & World Report, 2025–26
- #9 Social Psychology, U.S. News & World Report, 2025–26
- #13 History, U.S. News and World Report, 2025–26
- #14 Sociology, U.S. News and World Report, 2025–26
- #15 Clinical Psychology, U.S. News & World Report, 2025–26
- #17 English, U.S. News and World Report, 2025–26

- #18 Political Science, U.S. News & World Report, 2025–26
- #22 Economics, U.S. News & World Report, 2025–26
- #23 Psychology (overall), U.S. News & World Report, 2025–26

About The University of Texas at Austin

UT Austin is one of the premier universities in the world. Located in Austin, Texas—one of the nation's most dynamic centers for government, technology, and culture, it is the state's flagship university and an influential catalyst for scientific, economic and societal progress.

Founded in 1883, the University's main campus spans 431 acres with a community of 55,000 students, 4,700 faculty members and more than 10,000 staff members.

The University is a leader in multiple academic fields, including energy, artificial intelligence, semiconductors, robotics, entrepreneurship, and national security. Its graduate programs in accounting, petroleum engineering, geology, Latin American history, and sociology of population rank No. 1 in the United States. UT is among the top producers of doctoral degrees in the nation, and its alumni and faculty include Nobel laureates and Pulitzer Prize winners. In total, UT offers more than 150 undergraduate degree programs and 230 graduate programs across 17 colleges and schools in the sciences, arts, humanities and professions.

Rankings and Research by the Numbers

- No. 1 among Texas public universities, U.S. News & World Report
- No. 7 among American public universities, U.S. News & World Report
- 76 graduate and undergraduate programs in the top 10, U.S. News
- No. 1 in the nation for National Science Foundation grants
- No. 3 in the world for most patents granted (UT System-wide), National Academy of Inventors
- $1.14 billion in research expenditures (FY2024)
- 1,291 patents issued in the last 10 years
- 4,660 externally sponsored research projects
- ~100,000 applications for ~9,300 undergraduate spots in the Class of 2030

The University's holdings comprise more than 170 million objects, including a Gutenberg Bible and other rare books, manuscripts, photographs, artworks and artifacts from natural history to pop culture in eight museums and 12 libraries. The Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library and Museum was the first presidential library to be located on a university campus.

Over the past decade, the campus has undergone a significant modernization and expansion of its research, academic and community spaces. Recent projects added new state-of-the-art facilities, high-tech labs and dynamic collaboration spaces that are transforming the student and faculty experience. The University's large and diverse

student body, storied history, strong and supportive community and rich tradition have given rise to a proud alumni base of more than 600,000. Among UT's many well-known alumni are Michael Dell, Laura Bush, Jenna Bush Hager, Jeb Bush, Neil deGrasse Tyson, Kevin Durant, Wes Anderson, Robert Rodriguez, Matthew McConaughey, Renee Zellweger, Owen Wilson, Glen Powell, Marcia Gay Harden, Lady Bird Johnson, Sanya Richards Ross, Sam Rayburn, James Baker, Kay Bailey Hutchison, Brené Brown, Jim Allison, Rex Tillerson, Bill Moyers and Walter Cronkite, as well as current Texas Gov. Greg Abbott. Texas alumni include founders or co-founders of Dell Computers, American Airlines, 7-Eleven, National Instruments, CarMax, and iHeartRadio.

University Leadership

In 2025, UT welcomed a new leadership team, with both the president and provost taking on their current roles. At his formal inauguration in October, President Jim Davis delivered a bold and hopeful vision for The University of Texas at Austin to sharpen its commitment to academic balance and renew public trust at a time when higher education leaders face a turbulent national landscape.

President Jim Davis

Jim Davis is the 31st President of The University of Texas at Austin and a lifelong Longhorn. He grew up in Austin and served his country with distinction as a cryptologist in the United States Navy. After his Navy service, President Davis earned his bachelor's degree in history from UT and a law degree from Harvard Law School. Following a clerkship with the Supreme Court of Texas and a distinguished private law practice, he served as a Texas Deputy Attorney General, where he led the civil litigation division and advised the leadership of state agencies, including the University of Texas System and UT Austin. Since 2018, President Davis has served in several leadership positions at UT Austin and played central roles in a number of UT's transformational projects.

Executive Vice President and Provost Will Inboden

Dr. William Inboden became executive vice president and provost in August 2025, leading the University's academic mission and advancing excellence in research and teaching across campus. A distinguished scholar, institution-builder, and policymaker, he is a champion for student mentorship and has chaired or served on nearly 30 doctoral committees and advised more than 30 pre- and postdoctoral fellows. Most recently, Dr. Inboden directed the University of Florida's Alexander Hamilton School for Classical and Civic Education and previously spent 13 years at UT Austin as an award-winning faculty member and founding executive director of the Clements Center for National Security. He also served on the U.S. National Security Council and as a member of the U.S. Department of State's Policy Planning Staff. He is the author of numerous works on diplomatic history and U.S. foreign policy, including *The Peacemaker: Ronald Reagan, the Cold War, and the World on the Brink*.

About the City of Austin

Located at the edge of the picturesque Hill Country of Central Texas, Austin is the state

capital and one of the nation's most dynamic and fast-growing metropolitan areas. Widely recognized for its creative energy, entrepreneurial spirit, and distinctive cultural identity, Austin offers an environment in which innovation in technology, media, music, film, and storytelling intersect. The city is consistently acclaimed as a national center for creative talent and attracts artists, entrepreneurs, journalists, technologists, and makers from across the world. With South by Southwest, Formula 1 racing, and many other draws, Austin welcomes over 30 million tourists each year. The Austin-Bergstrom International Airport offers nonstop flights to 104 destinations across 11 countries (including flights to London, Paris, Frankfurt, the Hague, and Mexico City; Tokyo and Seoul are top priorities for future nonstops) and 40 U.S. states.

As the seat of Texas state government, Austin offers COLA students and faculty exceptional access to policymakers, government agencies, and civic institutions—an invaluable resource for the College's departments of Government, Economics, Sociology, and related fields. Austin is also home to major corporate headquarters, including Dell Technologies, Oracle, Tesla, and Whole Foods Market and it has attracted significant operations from companies such as Amazon, AMD, Apple, Google and Samsung, providing exceptional opportunities for collaboration, internships, and career pathways for COLA students across business, technology, and public policy.

With its combination of state government, a growing technology and business sector, and a vibrant cultural life—including its renowned music, film, and arts scenes—Austin provides an exceptional living laboratory for the study and practice of politics, society, culture, and human behavior in a rapidly evolving world.

How to Apply

Nominations, applications, and inquiries are welcome. For immediate applications, please submit a CV, cover letter, and any other relevant information and materials to this link.

To nominate a potential candidate or for any other inquiries, please reach out to UTCOLA@stockexecsearch.com. The Stock Executive Search team involved in this search includes:

- Toby Stock, Founder & CEO
- Corrie Willson, Director of Operations and Growth

The University of Texas at Austin, as an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer, complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding nondiscrimination and affirmative action. The University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, or veteran status in employment, educational programs and activities, and admissions.