



ELMIRA
COLLEGE



President

**LEADERSHIP
PROFILE**

January 2026

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Executive Summary



Elmira College seeks an accomplished, collaborative, and forward-thinking leader to serve as its 16th President. Reporting to the Board of Trustees, the next President will lead Elmira into a new era of growth, strengthening enrollment, philanthropy, and institutional vitality while steering the College through the final stages of its Strategic Plan (2023-2028).

Building on 170 years of academic excellence and innovation, Elmira remains committed to preparing students for leadership and service through a distinctive blend of liberal arts and professional education. Recent academic innovations—including new majors in Forensic Science and Social Work, and an accelerated BS-to-DO program—reflect Elmira’s commitment to aligning liberal arts with professional pathways.

Students from across the U.S. and around the world choose Elmira for its close-knit community, where administrators, faculty, and staff actively support academic and extracurricular success. Financially stable and preparing for a significant comprehensive campaign, Elmira awarded more than \$16 million in scholarships last year and raised more than \$5.9 million in philanthropic support.

Building on the accomplishments of President Charles W. Lindsay, the next President will ensure leadership continuity, strengthen resources, advance a comprehensive campaign, and honor Elmira’s rich traditions while embracing innovation. The ideal candidate will demonstrate strong business and organizational acumen, deep understanding of issues facing small, tuition-dependent colleges, and exceptional emotional intelligence. They will thrive through authentic engagement with faculty, staff, students, alumni, and the broader Elmira community. An earned terminal degree is strongly preferred.

For details on how to apply, submit nominations, or inquire about this role, please refer to the Procedure for Candidacy section at the end of this document.

Institutional Overview



Grounded in the liberal arts and sciences, Elmira College strives for excellence in both general and professional education, providing a collaborative and supportive environment that enables students to become active learners, effective leaders, responsible community members, and globally engaged citizens. Proud of its history and tradition, Elmira College is committed to the ideals of diversity, environmental sustainability, experiential learning, community engagement, and intellectual and personal growth.

Founded in 1855, Elmira College is a private, coeducational, Phi Beta Kappa institution located in Elmira, New York. Elmira was the first college for women to offer a course of study equal in rigor to the best men’s colleges of the time—a pioneering spirit that continues to shape its mission. The College offers more than 35 majors and minors, an honors program, and career-focused pathways that integrate liberal arts with professional preparation.

Elmira is situated in the scenic Southern Finger Lakes region of New York, an area renowned for its natural beauty and outdoor recreation. The campus spans 49 acres within the City of Elmira, with an additional 20 acres at the Murray Athletic Center in Pine Valley. Conveniently located 90 minutes south of Rochester and about four hours from Philadelphia, New York City, and Toronto, Elmira offers both accessibility and charm. The College is also home to the **Center for Mark Twain Studies**, which includes the Mark Twain Study, Mark Twain Archives, and Quarry Farm—one of four historically significant Twain heritage sites in the United States—attracting scholars from around the world.

Nearly 175 years after its founding, Elmira continues to provide access to rigorous higher education. Enrollment has grown significantly in recent years, supported by investments in career-aligned academics and co-curricular programs. Undergraduate enrollment is approximately 800 full-time students, most living on campus. Elmira also offers a **Master of Science in Education**, and **online professional development courses**.

Recent academic innovations include 16 new programs launched since 2023, such as majors in **Forensic Science**, **Medical Laboratory Sciences**, and **Social Work**, and minors in **Cybersecurity**, **Data Analytics**, and **Public Health**. A partnership with Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine created one of the only 2+4 **accelerated BS-to-DO programs**, reducing time to degree by two years. **Business Administration** now offers concentrations in Digital Marketing, Information Technology, and Sports Management, in addition to the Tommy Hilfiger Fashion Business School. Developed in partnership with Elmira native and global fashion icon Tommy Hilfiger and his family, the program provides a unique, insider’s understanding of how the fashion world operates, bridging creativity with commerce.

Enhancements to campus life include a new turf field and four new co-curricular and athletic programs: Pep Band, Club Ice Hockey, an expanded Competitive Dance program, and Women’s Flag Football, which became a conference-sponsored championship sport for the 2025–26 season. These investments reflect Elmira’s commitment to a vibrant student experience.

Elmira maintains stable financial health, raising more than \$5.9 million in charitable contributions and increasing grants by 61% in FY2025. Scholarship support exceeded \$16 million in 2024–25, and the College is preparing for a comprehensive campaign. It is supported by annual operating revenues of \$36.9 million and long-term investment assets of \$102 million.

RECENT ACCOLADES

- [U.S. News & World Report: #6 Best Regional Colleges North](#)
- [U.S. News & World Report: #3 Best Value Colleges North](#)
- [U.S. News & World Report: #2 Social Mobility](#)
- [Princeton Review: Best 391 Colleges in Nation](#)
- Washington Monthly: Top 208 Bachelor's Colleges
- [Money's list of Best Colleges in America 2025](#)
- Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Honor Society: [Transfer Honor Roll](#)

Students

By the Numbers

- **14:** average class size
- **97:** percent of students who complete a career-related internship before graduation
- **11-1** student-faculty ratio
- **60:** hours minimum of community engagement completed by all full-time students before graduating
- **40:** percent of students who study abroad at some point during their college career; and number of states and territories students call home
- **25:** number of countries represented in the student body
- **48%:** graduation rate (Fall 2019 cohort*) *COVID
- **75%:** first-year retention rate (Fall 2024 cohort)

CAMPUS COMMUNITY

Faculty

Elmira values close faculty-student mentorship. With a 11-1 student-to-faculty ratio, students work closely with professors who actively involve them in research, creative projects, and community initiatives.

Full Time

- Full-time: **56**
- Part-time: **32**
- Tenure-track: **50**

Staff

- Full-time Admin: **84**
- Part-time Admin: **17**
- All Staff: **76**

Fall 2025 Enrollment

- **287** new students
- **783** undergraduates
- **16** graduate students
- **799** total

Fall 2025 Class

- **32%** are first-generation students
- **3%** are international students.
- **15%** qualify for [Elmira's Soaring Eagles Take Flight program](#), which covers tuition and mandatory fees for eligible students.



CAMPUS LIFE

Elmira offers a vibrant campus life with 17 academic honor societies, 19 varsity athletic teams competing at the NCAA Division III level, and nearly 50 student organizations spanning academic, cultural and service interests. Eighty percent of students live on campus, enjoying events from arts and culture to leadership and recreation.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT

The Office of Social and Cultural Engagement offers programs that promote crosscultural understanding and social engagement. These initiatives advance Elmira's mission to prepare globally engaged citizens and create a campus culture that celebrates all backgrounds.

SUSTAINABILITY ON CAMPUS

Students play a pivotal role in advancing sustainability at Elmira. To foster engagement, the College created a [Sustainability Scholarship](#) and appointed four [Sustainability Leaders](#)—one from each class—who design and implement impactful projects that bring their ideas to life.

TEACH-IN ON CLIMATE AND JUSTICE

Since 2022, Elmira College has hosted a Teach-In on Climate and Justice, to spotlight climate solutions. EC hosts engaging panel discussions exploring climate justice and its intersections with art, media, fashion, physical and mental well-being, the surrounding community, religion, and campus sustainability.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND STUDENT RETENTION

Academic Success: The Center for Academic and Professional Excellence provides integrated academic and career support—from accessibility services to the writing center to career development—helping students thrive in college and beyond.

Health & Wellness: Elmira prioritizes student well-being through comprehensive health services at [The Clarke Health Center](#), offering basic medical care, allergy treatment, specialist referrals, prescription refills, and more. Services are offered through a unique partnership with Guthrie, a regional non-profit integrated health care system.

ATHLETICS AND STUDENT RECREATION

Athletics is a cornerstone of campus life and a key element of Elmira's strategic plan. Nearly half of students participate in sports, enhancing recruitment, retention, and campus vibrancy. Elmira competes in NCAA Division III with 19 intercollegiate teams and is a member of the Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference (Women's Wrestling), Empire 8, National Cheerleaders Association, National Dance Association, SUNY Athletic Conference (Men's Wrestling), United Volleyball Conference, and New England Hockey Conference. The College boasts seven national championships and strong academic performance among student-athletes.

Success in the classroom:

- Over **70%** of student-athletes maintain a GPA **above 3.00**
- **192** earned a GPA of **3.4** or higher
- **31** achieved a **4.0** GPA
- **90** with a **3.00–3.99** GPA
- **104** and **111** student-athletes were named to the Conference President's List in Fall 2024 and Spring 2025, respectively

COMMUNITY AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Elmira College advances experiential learning through innovative programs that integrate creativity, career readiness, and global engagement. The Under Wing Mentoring Program, launched as a pilot in the 2024–2025 academic year, is a one-term free course in a student's junior or senior year that takes them step-by-step through interview preparation, business etiquette, and career development training. During the pilot year students were paired with 58 alumni mentors for networking and guidance

- Students completed **7,320** hours of community engagement, including **3,024** hours by the Class of 2028.
- **99%** of the Class of 2025 participated in community engagement.
- **98%** completed an internship.
- **77%** of internship supervisors nominated their intern for the Stand Energy prize.



FINANCIALS/FUNDRAISING

- FY25 Fundraising Goal: **\$1,750,000**
- FY25 Actual Received (as of 6/30): **\$5,912,589**
- Scholarships awarded in 2024–2025: **\$16,230,260**

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Elmira is governed by a **Board of Trustees**. The following positions are senior officers of the College, reporting to the President:

- Provost
- Vice President of Campus Life
- Vice President of Communications & Marketing
- Vice President of Enrollment Management
- Vice President of Finance and Administration
- Vice President of Institutional Advancement and Alumni Engagement

STRATEGIC PLAN

Elmira provides clear pathways to careers in business, education, law, medicine, research, and other fields by emphasizing hands-on learning and the development of professional skills.

The **2023–2028 Strategic Plan** advances Elmira's mission by blending liberal arts with professional programs and sustaining the College's tradition of immersive learning. It establishes a five-year financial framework and three strategic priorities: **Enhance Strength and Stability, Foster Innovation, and Ensure an Inclusive and Supportive Environment**.

Amid ongoing challenges for higher education, the plan provides a roadmap for stability and innovation while reinforcing Elmira's long-standing commitment to academic excellence and transformative student experiences.

THE COMMUNITY

Nestled in the stunning Finger Lakes region, the City of Elmira is a small city of about 35,000. **The region** offers access to skiing, hiking, water sports, golf, bike touring, museums, wineries, and breweries. Year-round events such as outdoor concerts, farmers markets, street painting festivals, and outdoor movie nights create a vibrant community atmosphere.



HISTORY & TRADITIONS

Elmira College's rich history and traditions unite generations of students and alumni.

Center for Mark Twain Studies—Elmira hosts the internationally recognized Center for Mark Twain Studies, which includes the Mark Twain Study, Archives, and Quarry Farm—one of four major Twain heritage sites in the U.S. Twain's wife, Olivia Langdon Clemens (Class of 1864), was an Elmira, New York, native.

The Mark Twain Study—where Twain wrote *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*—is now on campus and was named one of the nation's top 10 literary landmarks by USA Today.

Quarry Farm, where Twain spent more than 20 summers, is stewarded by Elmira and recognized as a New York State literary landmark.

A Soaring Tradition: The "Soaring Eagles" name, adopted in the 1970s, honors the City of Elmira's distinction as the "Soaring Capital of America." In 2022, the College initiated a campus-wide contest to name the mascot. After multiple rounds of voting, Elmira College President Dr. Charles Lindsay revealed the winning name: Simeon the Soaring Eagle. The name pays tribute to Simeon Benjamin, an Elmira businessman, philanthropist, and founder of Elmira College.

Mountain Day is a tradition that dates back more than a century. Dean Anstice Harris instituted the Mountain Day tradition at Elmira College in October of 1918. The day is not a designated holiday, but rather a day in which classes are canceled, allowing students, faculty, and staff to engage with each other in memorable and less formal ways.

In early years, students, faculty, and staff enjoyed a picnic lunch and hiked to Quarry Farm on East Hill. They also participated in games, planting projects, relaxing, and enjoying the colorful foliage. In recent years, Mountain Day has been more campus-oriented. After a number of morning activities, a picnic lunch is served to the entire campus community, and the remainder of the day is spent enjoying the fall weather, games, and outdoor events.

The **Holiday Banquet**, Elmira's oldest tradition, begins a weekend of festivities with a semi-formal Thanksgiving dinner where faculty and staff serve students dinner, carving turkeys and passing dishes in family-style fashion. The graduating class presents a holiday ornament that has special significance to the College. The class officers present the College President with the ornament to adorn the tree in the Dining Hall, followed by traditional holiday songs led by seniors.

Octagon Fair is a family-friendly day of fun, food, games, crafts, and entertainment for the entire community. The day traditionally features a line-up of live entertainment including performances by Elmira College musical groups and demonstrations by clubs and organizations like the EC Danceline. Food vendors, regional artisans, and student clubs selling raffle baskets, crafts, and baked goods, with proceeds benefiting student organizations.

May Days, also dating back to the early 1900s, is a week of spring festivities and campus-wide celebrations in the warming weather. The Wednesday of the May Days week is a day of no classes, a campus wide picnic, and games and activities.

Candlelight, one of Elmira's most cherished traditions, begins at Fall Welcome and concludes on the eve of Commencement four years later. At Fall Welcome, new students process by candlelight along the brick-paved walkways leading to The Puddle. After taking seats around The Puddle, they are addressed by established members of the Elmira College community. Upperclass students who have led the new students' orientation traditionally sit across The Puddle from the new students. The Fall Welcome Candlelight ceremony marks the last time the new class is gathered on campus before all other students return to campus to begin the academic year.

Four years later, the class reunites for Candlelight on the eve of Commencement, with remarks from classmates, a faculty or staff "patron saint," and a parent speaker.

Opportunities for Leadership



Elmira College's 16th President will assume leadership during a period of significant forward momentum, charged with sustaining Elmira's strong position while making strategic decisions that secure its long-term vitality.

The president will have the following opportunities:

- **Provide leadership continuity:** Elmira's recent Middle States accreditation yielded a strong scorecard with no pressing issues identified, positioning the next President to build on a solid foundation. The next leader will do so by empowering a talented leadership team, supporting enrollment and fundraising strategies, and sustaining momentum while identifying future opportunities. Hallmarks of success will include transparent communication and collaboration across the Elmira community and beyond.
- **Strengthen Elmira's resources:** Recent enrollment gains and philanthropic growth have strengthened Elmira's financial position, creating a platform for continued progress. The next President will be a charismatic, energetic, and inspirational leader—skilled at telling Elmira's compelling story, forging partnerships, and connecting with alumni and friends. They will serve as the primary face of Elmira, partnering closely with the Office of Institutional Advancement and Alumni Engagement, traveling to events, engaging donors, cultivating relationships, stewarding gifts, and preparing for the launch of a comprehensive campaign in 2027.
- **Support enrollment growth:** Like many institutions, Elmira faced enrollment challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the past two years have brought promising growth, with the incoming classes totaling 306 new and transfer students for Fall 2024 and 287 new and transfer students for Fall 2025. The President will provide strategic support to sustain this trajectory, working collaboratively with their leadership team and the Board.
- **Enhance College Trust:** The Elmira community values transparency and clear communication. The new President will foster a climate of accountability, active listening, and collaboration. While they must have the courage and vision to make difficult decisions in a rapidly evolving higher education landscape, they will do so with unwavering ethics and deep compassion.
- **Honor the past and embrace the present:** Elmira's proud history is cherished by students and alumni. The next President will celebrate its traditions with enthusiasm, engaging fully in campus life. Residing on campus, they will immerse themselves in activities and events, building authentic and meaningful connections with faculty, staff, and students.

Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities



Elmira College seeks a President who will sustain and advance the College's upward trajectory while honoring its traditions and distinctive character.

Key qualifications and attributes of the ideal candidate include:

- **Strategic and Steady Leadership:** A leader who values stability and continuity, building on the College's current momentum. The President will recognize and support the strong work already being done by senior officers and foster a collaborative environment.
- **Experience in Enrollment Management and Marketing:** Deep understanding of enrollment strategies, branding, and marketing to strengthen Elmira's position in a competitive landscape. The President will bring insight and creativity to attract and retain students while respecting the College's niche identity.
- **Exceptional Fundraising and External Relations Skills:** Demonstrated success in philanthropy, alumni engagement, and external outreach. The ability to cultivate relationships and secure significant resources is essential. A strong, confident presence that inspires donors and partners is critical.
- **Fiscal Acumen and Operational Focus:** A results-oriented leader who understands the financial models of higher education and can make informed, strategic decisions to ensure financial sustainability and institutional strength.
- **Commitment to Elmira's Traditions and Community:** Appreciation for the College's history, values, and unique small-town setting. The President will embrace the informal, friendly culture while serving as a respected and ethical public face of the institution.
- **Emotional Intelligence and Collaborative Spirit:** A leader who demonstrates empathy, transparency, and the ability to build trust across constituencies. Strong interpersonal skills and a willingness to engage faculty, staff, and students in meaningful dialogue are essential.
- **Student-Centered Engagement:** The President will be deeply involved in campus life—attending events, interacting with students, and fostering a vibrant, inclusive community. Residence on campus ensures accessibility and visibility.
- **Courage and Resilience:** The ability to make difficult decisions with integrity and respect for differing viewpoints. A leader who can navigate challenges with confidence and maintain focus on the College's mission.
- **Experience and Perspective:** Prior leadership experience in small, private colleges is strongly preferred, along with an understanding of the dynamics of a close-knit campus community.
- **Academic Credentials:** It is strongly preferred that the next President hold an earned doctorate or terminal degree. Candidates without such credentials may be considered if through previous experience and leadership in transformational undertakings and commitment to excellence in higher education they would garner the respect of the campus and broader communities.

Procedure for Candidacy



WittKieffer is assisting Elmira College in this search. All applications, nominations and inquiries are invited. For fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by **March 16, 2026**.

Applications should include, as separate documents, a CV or résumé and a letter of interest addressing the responsibilities and requirements described in this profile.

Applications, nominations and inquiries can be directed to the WittKieffer consultants supporting this search by visiting the [WittKieffer website](#) or contacting the team, Robin Mamlet, Sandra Chu and Corin Edwards at: Elmira-President@Wittkieffer.com

The salary range for this role is \$325,000 to \$550,000 depending on experience.

As an equal opportunity employer, Elmira College is committed to providing a diverse working and learning environment. In compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and other federal, state, and local laws, Elmira College does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, race, gender, sex, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, reproductive health decisions, or disability in any phase of its employment process and of its admission or financial aid programs, or any aspects of its educational programs or activities.

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