



## **Chief Human Resource Officer and Associate Vice President**

Leadership Profile

January 2026



*WittKieffer*

## Executive Summary

Ithaca College (IC), a private, liberal arts college located in the Finger Lakes region of New York State, seeks an accomplished and strategic executive to serve as Chief Human Resources Officer and Associate Vice President (CHRO). This is an exceptional opportunity to establish a strategic, modern, agile, and human-centered HR organization that thoughtfully embraces innovation and technology, works creatively within constraints, and keeps people at the heart of every decision.

Ithaca College is a residential campus where its nearly 4,700 students find life-changing academic pathways, powerful career networks, and lifelong community. Founded in 1892 by violinist W. Grant Egbert, [Ithaca College](#) had humble beginnings as a music conservatory in rented rooms in downtown Ithaca, New York. Over the ensuing decades, the institution continued to diversify its curriculum, and, in 1931, the conservatory was chartered as a private college. By the 1960s, with 2,000 students, construction of IC's modern campus began on South Hill, overlooking downtown Ithaca and offering breathtaking views of Cayuga Lake.

Recognized by *U.S. News & World Report* as #8 Most Innovative Schools in the North, the College now offers 140 majors, minors, and interdisciplinary programs in its undergraduate offerings and over a dozen graduate degree programs at five schools: [School of Business](#), [Roy H. Park School of Communications](#), [School of Health Sciences and Human Performance](#), [School of Humanities and Sciences](#), and [School of Music, Theatre, and Dance](#).

Reporting to the [Senior Vice President for Strategic Services and Initiatives](#), the CHRO provides strategic leadership and direction for all aspects of human resources at Ithaca College. This role serves as a key institutional leader and strategic partner to the President, Cabinet, and senior leadership team, shaping and advancing a people-centered strategy that supports the College's mission, values, and long-term sustainability. The CHRO leads a hard-working human resources team of approximately 11 collaborative, resilient, and exceptionally dedicated professionals serving an employee base of about 1,363 professionals, inclusive of 476 faculty (385 full-time, and 91 part time), 887 staff and administrators (702 full-time and 185 part-time) and two collective bargaining units, Public Safety (UGSOA) and Contingent Faculty (SEIU).

At a time of significant change in higher education, the CHRO will be charged with reimagining the role, structure, and impact of IC's HR organization, designing contemporary, efficient, and human-centered approaches to service delivery that enable the College to be more efficient while maintaining excellence and cultivating a culture of care, trust, and transparency. In doing so, the CHRO will lead a comprehensive portfolio including talent acquisition, organizational design, workforce planning, compensation and benefits, employee engagement, learning and development, employee and labor relations, performance management, HR technology and analytics, compliance, and risk management.

This is a unique opportunity for a passionate and forward-thinking human resources professional to join a collaborative, innovative, and future-focused institution and lead a workplace transformation that will have a lasting impact on the community. Bringing an equity lens to their work and decision-making, the CHRO will play a critical leadership role in advancing institutional areas of focus, as the College approaches the end of its current strategic plan, [Ithaca Forever](#), to determine and maintain an appropriate, sustainable size for their programs, structures, and associated resources at every level and to shape a strategy and action plan to realize the goal of being an employer of choice. In addition, as the College undertakes a comprehensive strategic planning process during the 2026–27 academic year, this will provide the CHRO with an exciting opportunity to help shape the College's next strategic plan.

The Ithaca community desires a collaborative, equity-focused bridge builder to proactively support and engage with a diverse and multigenerational workforce of faculty, staff, and students, each of whom requires a leader who

seeks to learn and understand their nuanced needs and how to best support them. Most of all, this opportunity is an invitation to join an institution that authentically believes in the value of a people-centered approach.

Successful candidates will bring a record of creatively and nimbly reimagining HR services, processes, or organizational models in environments with constrained resources; experience with broad functional areas of human resources, with notable experience and expertise in compensation strategy, benefits strategy and administration, workforce planning, and employee relations; and record of designing, leading, implementing and communicating organizational change, service redesign, and cross-functional collaboration. In addition, experience with and comfort in leveraging technology, data, and analytics to improve outcomes, with a clear commitment to the human-centered and ethical application of these tools, will be paramount. Demonstrated experience in labor relations, including direct involvement in collective bargaining negotiations, contract administration, and dispute resolution are desired. A bachelor's degree is required, as is at least eight years of progressively responsible senior-level human resources leadership experience, including supervisory experience, preferably in higher education or a similarly complex mission-driven organization. An advanced degree and/or professional HR certification, as well as prior experience in a private undergraduate/master's institution, are preferred.

Ithaca College anticipates that the salary range for this role will be between \$180,000 and \$210,000, commensurate upon experience.

To submit a nomination or express personal interest in this position, please see *Procedure for Candidacy* at the end of this document.



# Role of the Chief Human Resource Officer and Associate Vice President

The Chief Human Resources Officer and Associate Vice President (CHRO) provides strategic leadership and direction for all aspects of human resources at Ithaca College. Reporting to the Senior Vice President for Strategic Services and Initiatives, the CHRO serves as a key institutional leader and strategic partner to the President, Cabinet, and senior leadership team, shaping and advancing a people-centered strategy that supports the College's mission, values, and long-term sustainability.

At a time of significant change in higher education and constrained resources, the CHRO is expected to reimagine the role, structure, and impact of the HR organization, designing modern, efficient, and human-centered approaches to service delivery that enable the College to do more with less while maintaining excellence, cultivating a culture of care, trust, and transparency.

The CHRO leads a comprehensive human resources portfolio including talent acquisition, organizational design, workforce planning, compensation and benefits, employee engagement, learning and development, employee and labor relations, performance management, HR technology and analytics, compliance, and risk management.

The CHRO plays a critical role in helping the College navigate change, align its workforce with institutional priorities, and foster an environment of inclusion, accountability, innovation, and continuous improvement.

Key responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

## **Strategic Leadership, Reimagination, and Institutional Partnership**

- Serve as a trusted advisor to the President and senior leadership, contributing to institutional strategy, planning, and decision-making through a people and workforce lens.
- Lead the reimagination of the HR function, including service models, processes, roles, and capabilities, to meet evolving institutional needs with fewer resources while improving clarity, effectiveness, and employee experience.
- Partner with the President, Cabinet, and senior leaders to anticipate workforce trends, organizational risks, and talent needs, and to design sustainable organizational structures and staffing models.
- Advance change management and organizational effectiveness efforts that support institutional transformation, financial sustainability, and long-term resilience.

## **Workforce Planning, Organizational Design, and Talent Strategy**

- Lead workforce planning efforts, in close collaboration with institutional leadership, to ensure the College has the appropriate structures, roles, staffing levels, and capabilities to meet current and future goals.
- Design and implement talent strategies that balance institutional priorities, employee well-being, and operational realities.
- Conduct job audits, role evaluations, and organizational assessments; recommend position design, job classifications, and reporting structures that promote efficiency, equity, and accountability.
- Oversee succession planning, career pathways, and leadership development initiatives to engage, retain, and grow talent across the institution.

## Compensation, Benefits, and Sustainable Total Rewards

- Lead the strategic development and administration of the College's compensation philosophy and total rewards strategy, ensuring competitiveness, equity, regulatory compliance, and financial sustainability.
- Partner with College leadership to manage compensation and benefits costs responsibly, balancing affordability with the need to attract, retain, and support a talented and committed workforce.
- Oversee market analysis, salary benchmarking, job evaluation, and annual salary planning processes for exempt and non-exempt employees.
- Oversee the design, evaluation, and continuous improvement of benefits programs; monitor trends, costs, and utilization; and recommend innovative, data-informed approaches to maximize value for both employees and the institution.

## Employee Engagement, Performance, and Development

- Oversee the design and delivery of performance management systems that promote clarity of expectations, continuous feedback, professional growth, and alignment with institutional goals.
- Lead the development of employee engagement and retention strategies that are practical, sustainable, and closely tied to organizational outcomes.
- Ensure delivery of learning and development programs that support supervisors, emerging leaders, and staff at all career stages.
- Foster a culture that values communication, trust, accountability, and continuous learning.

## Employee Relations, Compliance, and Institutional Risk

- Provide executive oversight of employee relations programs, including investigations, grievance processes, and conflict resolution services.
- Maintain constructive relationships with labor unions, participate in contract negotiation, and coordinate administration of collective bargaining agreements, ensuring both college management and union representatives understand and adhere to their rights and obligations, and serve as a primary resource in addressing grievances and disputes.
- Ensure compliance with federal, state, and local employment laws and regulations, including wage and hours, benefits, EEO, immigration, and related requirements.
- Provide leadership and oversight related to employment aspects of Title IX and related institutional compliance obligations, partnering closely with the Title IX Coordinator and campus stakeholders to ensure fair, consistent, and compliant practices.
- Ensure timely and accurate completion of required government reporting and mandated notifications.

## Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

- Provide leadership in cultivating an equitable, inclusive, and respectful campus community, where everyone belongs. Model inclusive leadership behaviors and promote equitable practices across recruitment, hiring, development, and advancement.
- Partner with campus leaders to embed equity and inclusion principles into HR policies, processes, and decision-making.

## HR Operations, Technology, Analytics, and Innovation

- Oversee the effective use and continuous improvement of HR systems, including IC HR Cloud, ensuring data integrity, reporting accuracy, and regulatory compliance.
- Explore and responsibly leverage technology, including automation, system optimization, analytics, and AI-enabled tools to improve HR services, reduce administrative burden, and enhance decision-making, while always prioritizing human judgment, care, and trust.
- Collaborate closely with Information Technology & Analytics partners to identify practical, cost-effective innovations that improve service delivery and employee experience.
- Use data and analytics to inform workforce planning, compensation strategy, engagement efforts, and institutional decision-making.
- Develop and manage departmental operating and capital budgets; ensure responsible stewardship of resources.

## Human Resources Team Leadership

- Lead, develop, and support the Office of Human Resources staff to provide engaged and effective human capital systems, programs, and support, ensure high levels of performance, and provide guidance, assessment, and opportunities for professional growth and development.
- Build a human-centered and service-oriented culture and foster an environment that requires adaptability, creativity, institutional and personal evolution, organizational agility, and shared ownership of outcomes.

## Collaboration and Constituent Engagement

- Build strong partnerships with executive leadership, deans, administrative and academic leaders, as well as faculty and staff governing bodies to ensure HR initiatives reflect institutional needs and shared priorities.
- Communicate consistently and clearly with stakeholders, nurturing trust and shared accountability.
- Serve as a trusted, impartial resource for faculty and staff concerns while upholding fairness and respect.
- Represent Ithaca College's human-capital perspective in institutional planning and cross-functional initiatives.
- Foster an environment of shared accountability, celebrate successes, and reinforce collective ownership of HR's role in advancing Ithaca's mission.



## Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

The CHRO will develop a reimagined strategic, people-focused vision for human resources, positioning the function as proactive and central to shaping the employee experience. Integrating care for Ithaca's employees into HR strategy is essential, with an emphasis on building an agile, modern organization that leverages technology and innovation while keeping individuals at the heart of decisions. The CHRO will promote inclusivity and equity in their work as they strive to position the College as a destination employer where people are prioritized. The CHRO will collaborate across the institution, clarify points of contact, and enhance HR's service orientation, ensuring the division anticipates and effectively responds to change and evolving organizational needs.

In addition, the CHRO will be charged with advancing the following priorities:

- **Establish Faith and Trust in Human Resources as a Valued Service Organization**

The Ithaca community desires a leader who will serve as a collaborative bridge builder, working intentionally to cultivate productive relationships and connections across the organization. This includes authentically getting to know campus partners, faculty, and staff across campus by establishing a visible and engaged presence and interacting regularly with different groups and divisional areas to listen, to learn, and to inform an understanding of the employee experience at all levels. This includes redefining the support and services that human resources can deliver to both academic and administrative leaders, ensuring they have the necessary tools and resources to be successful.

The incoming CHRO should be an inspirational leader who supports, influences, and motivates others. The leader should demonstrate self-awareness, be viewed as highly collaborative, and build trust through transparency and consultation with stakeholders at all levels of the organization. The CHRO will successfully integrate into the Ithaca community, proactively learn the organization, and become well-known, trusted, and respected across all groups. This includes establishing a reputation as a leader who champions employees and ensures faculty and staff voices feel heard, valued, and respected.

- **Prioritize Frequent, Authentic, and Transparent Communication**

Ithaca's faculty and staff value responsive service, ethical decision-making, and collaborative problem-solving. They also seek greater visibility into how human resources decisions are formed and communicated. The CHRO is expected to champion a culture in which communication is proactive, policies and procedures are updated, relevant, easily accessible, and understandable, and feedback loops are routine and meaningful.

Critical to their success will be establishing a reputation for prioritizing transparency through frequent and authentic communication with all constituents. Actively, consistently, and effectively communicating key human resources messaging and strategic themes throughout the organization, while being mindful of the many different audiences and effective methods of communication delivery for various groups, will be paramount.

- **Assess HR Infrastructure, Optimize Technology, and Enhance Effectiveness**

To advance a people-centered strategy and culture of care, the CHRO will assess the current human resources model, operations, practices, and infrastructure to establish a reputation for efficiency, accessibility, responsiveness, and best practices that ensure optimal service for all employees. Key to this effort is identifying opportunities to leverage technology, automate processes, and reduce duplicate efforts.

Although the human resources team has begun documenting and analyzing business processes, the incoming CHRO will continue this work with a human-centered lens, seeking ways to improve service delivery, enhance effectiveness, and optimize systems. This requires a leader with systems thinking experience who can automate and streamline operations while maintaining a strong focus on employee service. With Oracle HCM in place for approximately five years, there is significant potential to capitalize on its full functionality – both to inform workforce decisions and to modernize HR's transactional activities.

**▪ Advance Data-Informed, Human-Centered Continuous Innovation**

Supporting today's higher education workforce requires the thoughtful use of people, data and technology to improve decision-making and service delivery. For example, the CHRO will be expected to integrate analytics into human resources, using data on turnover, engagement, compensation, and workforce trends to inform leadership decisions and continuous improvement. With Human Resources, Information Technology, and Analytics now unified under the Senior Vice President for Strategic Services & Initiatives, the College has an opportunity to deepen collaboration and explore shared expertise and resources. This structure creates meaningful potential to strengthen data-informed workforce decisions and to explore practical, cost-effective, and human-centered uses of technology, including analytics, automation, and AI to streamline operations, reduce administrative burden, and elevate service delivery, reinforcing HR's role as a trusted and indispensable institutional partner.

**▪ Shape a Strategy to Increase Retention and Expand IC's Employee Value Proposition**

The CHRO will view organizational culture as a competitive advantage and create cost effective human-focused programs to engage, develop, and retain top talent, positioning the institution as an employer of choice. A key part of this effort is building high-performing teams by providing thorough manager training, not just for new supervisors, but for all managers, to ensure they have the tools, resources, and skills needed for effective coaching, employee development, and performance management. Structured leadership training will be essential to achieving these objectives, as will a close partnership with the College Counsel in proactively addressing employee relations matters, thoughtfully approaching investigations, grievance processes, and conflict resolution with care, with a lens of both equity and objectivity.

Additionally, the CHRO can enhance employee recognition initiatives and establish strong pathways for professional growth. The focus will be on transparency in roles, clearly articulated job descriptions, and career ladders highlighting advancement opportunities. By holistically supporting the employee experience and demonstrating consistent people-centered decision-making, the CHRO aims to boost retention and ensure the College remains competitive, innovative, and attractive to exceptional professionals who share its vision of being "a global destination for bold thinkers seeking to build thriving communities."

**▪ Examine Strategic Methods for Aligning Costs with Attractive Employee Benefits**

Recognizing that benefits represent one of the institution's largest and fastest-growing operating expenses, the CHRO will leverage expertise in benefits design and administration and work with senior leadership in exploring innovative benefit design models including potential plan design changes, vendor partnerships, alternative funding arrangements, and wellness or preventive care strategies that balance cost containment and risk management with the imperative to recruit, retain, and value faculty and staff. The CHRO will regularly benchmark benefits programs against peer and aspirant institutions, as well as the regional higher education labor market, making informed recommendations to senior leadership to maintain market competitiveness while managing cost growth.

These efforts require an intentional focus on cultivating trust with faculty and staff by leading benefits decisions with transparency, empathy, and data-driven rationale. Driving frequent communication and education efforts to enhance employee understanding of benefits value, trade-offs, and cost drivers, while fostering transparency and engagement across the community is paramount. With a commitment to stewardship, the CHRO will advise senior leadership on benefits trends, risks, and strategic trade-offs, ensuring that benefits decisions are both fiscally responsible and supportive of the institution's mission and people-centered values.

**▪ Human Resources Team Management and Development**

The current HR staff members are deeply committed to the organization's mission and seek a leader with both an optimistic and yet empathetic approach who will honor and recognize the significant amount of transition the division has undergone in recent years while empowering, developing, and inspiring the team to elevate their strengths in service delivery. The CHRO will build upon a collaborative team culture and establish common goals, breaking down silos and barriers to communication that may have formed during periods of leadership transition. The team desires a leader who will cultivate a culture of respect and care for one

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another, as well as a shared collaborative approach to delivering elevated service, support, and partnership to the community.

The new leader will bring experience in developing high-performing teams and a strong commitment to providing mentoring and professional development to the team. At the same time, the CHRO will set goals and hold staff members accountable for their outcomes. The leader will foster a culture of collaboration, engagement, and excellence and will model the highest standards of collegiality and productivity.

## Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

The CHRO will be a thought partner and strategist, capable of innovative, data-informed solutions, and an effective communicator who builds trust and fosters shared ownership across the College. In addition, the ideal candidate will possess the following professional qualifications and personal characteristics:

### Education / Certification

- Bachelor's degree required; an advanced degree and/or HR certification (e.g., PHR, SPHR, SHRM-SCP) are highly desirable.

### Knowledge and Experience

- Minimum of eight years of progressively responsible senior-level human resources leadership experience, including supervisory experience, preferably in higher education or a similarly complex mission-driven organization. Prior experience in a private undergraduate / master's institution is preferred.
- A record of creatively and innovatively reimagining HR services, processes, or organizational models in environments with constrained resources.
- Experience with broad functional areas of human resources (inclusive, of but not limited to talent acquisition, performance management, onboarding and retention, learning and development, labor relations, leave administration, policy governance HR technology and analytics, compliance, and risk management) with evidence of particularly strong experience and expertise in compensation strategy, benefits administration, workforce planning, and employee relations. Demonstrated experience in labor relations, including direct involvement in collective bargaining negotiations, contract administration, and dispute resolution in an academic or similar organizational setting is desired.
- A record of designing, leading, implementing, and communicating organizational change, service redesign, and cross-functional collaboration.
- Experience with and comfort in leveraging technology, data, and analytics to improve outcomes, with a clear commitment to human-centered and ethical application.
- A record of supervising employees and building an effective team by developing, implementing, and executing strategies through people by providing leadership, feedback, and coaching, and modeling engagement and openness for shared ideas and teamwork.
- Knowledge of federal and state employment law and evolving regulatory influences; a record of developing and implementing compliant policies and procedures and risk management, including Title IX-related employment considerations.

## Leadership and Attributes

- Demonstrated ability to build trust, navigate competing priorities, and lead through influence.
- Strong communication skills and experience in effectively translating strategies, initiatives, and decisions, in complexity, to diverse constituencies who may not be as well-versed in human resources terms and methods.
- Demonstrated the ability to communicate honestly and make tough decisions, even when information is limited. Shows a commitment to making timely choices, holding others accountable, and proactively addressing performance concerns. Consistently brings forward alternative viewpoints and issues to leadership and possesses the courage to make unpopular decisions when needed, while clearly explaining the reasoning to all stakeholders.
- Demonstrated commitment to equity, inclusion, and belonging.
- Evidence of a leadership style grounded in integrity, empathy, service, and accountability.
- Deep resonance with and demonstrated passion for Ithaca's mission and an appreciation for and ability to cultivate a shared governance model of engagement.



# About Ithaca College

## Overview

Ithaca College is a private residential campus where students find life-changing academic pathways, powerful career networks, and lifelong community. Founded in 1892 by violinist W. Grant Egbert, [Ithaca College \(IC\)](#) had humble beginnings as a music conservatory in rented rooms in downtown Ithaca, New York. Over the ensuing decades, the institution continued to diversify its curriculum, and, in 1931, the conservatory was chartered as a private college. By the 1960s, with 2,000 students, construction of IC's modern campus began on South Hill, overlooking downtown Ithaca and offering breathtaking views of Cayuga Lake.

The College now offers 140 majors, minors, and interdisciplinary programs in its undergraduate offerings and over a dozen graduate degree programs at five schools: [School of Business](#), [Roy H. Park School of Communications](#), [School of Health Sciences and Human Performance](#), [School of Humanities and Sciences](#), and [School of Music, Theatre, and Dance](#).

In addition, IC operates satellite campuses, including the [Ithaca College London Center](#) and the Los Angeles Program at the James B. Pendleton Center, as well as several international direct enrollment programs in countries across the globe, such as China, Australia, and Sweden, among others.

Today, IC is known for its intellectually curious, creative, and innovative students who are eager to make an impact on the world after graduation. IC's small class sizes and extensive alum network provide students the opportunity to build personal mentorships, collaborative partnerships, and professional guidance during their time at Ithaca College and long after.

**Student Profile:** Whether they are winning Pulitzers, launching nonprofits, anchoring broadcast news, leading multibillion-dollar companies, or revolutionizing patient care (among many other pursuits and accomplishments), students at Ithaca College make an impact. Currently, Ithaca enrolls approximately 4,700 students (4,200 undergraduates and 500 graduate students) representing 47 states, three U.S. territories, and 51 countries. Additionally, IC has been recognized as a top choice for LGBTQ+ students by various organizations, including Best Colleges and Campus Pride, is home to a growing student population of students of color, and 16.4% of undergraduate students and 17.5% of first-time first-year students are first-generation college students.

## Mission and Vision

IC's vision is to be a global destination for bold thinkers seeking to build thriving communities. Its mission is to educate, engage, and empower through theory, practice, and performance.



## Values

### Academic Excellence

Ithaca College views academic excellence as the integration of theory, practice, and performance. The College's unique fusion of the liberal arts and professional programs assumes that knowledge needs to inform and be informed by hands-on experience, real-life application, and concrete action. Curricular and co-curricular activities should provide all community members with opportunities to develop, debate, and critically evaluate strategies to address complex problems.

### Respect and Accountability

Mutual care, respect, and accountability are expected in all facets of institutional life. Ithaca College values every community member's dignity and seeks to create a social environment where everyone can flourish and be their authentic self. As a thriving community, IC demonstrates practices that foster a sense of belonging, shared responsibility, collaboration, innovation, and achievement. Accountability to Ithaca College's values and policies provides the community with the opportunity to consider the consequences of its actions, to engage in self-examination, and to find ways to restore trust and forgiveness when harm is caused. A culture of care and love grows when people respectfully engage in learning opportunities that help them shift out of their presumed paradigms.

### Innovation

A culture of innovation enables IC to remain forward-thinking, nimble, and adaptable to social and technological change. When people from diverse backgrounds and experiences are empowered to exchange ideas and solve problems collaboratively, innovation grows, creativity sparks, and institutional and personal goals are achieved. Collaboration between the professional and liberal arts traditions cultivates academic excellence in the spirit of theory, practice, and performance.

### Sustainability

Adopting institutional strategies that offer ecological and resource-based sustenance to the people and places of Ithaca College ensures its future. Sustainability means increasing the use of renewable energy sources and reducing IC's carbon footprint, as it acknowledges the impact of decisions on the community and the planet. Sustainability also means practicing good stewardship of financial resources. It means fostering connections among students, faculty, staff, alums, and administrators to serve the public. IC activates critical thinking, scholarly inquiry, professional skills, and performance to positively impact, sustain, and advance its local and global communities.

### Equity

IC adopts an equity framework that proactively seeks to make the College accessible, affordable, and inclusive for all people, especially those impacted by systemic disadvantage, marginalization, and exclusion. This endeavor requires resource allocation as well as organizational structures that facilitate equity. It demands adopting strategies for increasing the representational diversity of students, faculty, and staff who are currently underrepresented in higher education. It also means implementing inclusive policies and practices proven to foster the retention, belonging, and advancement of people who face systemic disadvantages and discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ability, and national origin. Finally, an equity framework assumes inclusive decision-making processes, transparency, and accountability as the primary ways of working.

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## Strategic Plan/Priorities

Ithaca College is approaching the end of its current [strategic plan](#) and will undertake a comprehensive strategic planning process during the 2026–27 academic year, providing an exciting opportunity for the new CHRO to help shape the College's next strategic plan.

### Ithaca Forever (Ithaca's current strategic plan)

#### Our Purpose

- Ithaca College will become a model for student success, engagement, and well-being, helping students to develop their unique potential.

#### Our Commitments / Year-Round Campus

- Become a year-round campus for living and learning opportunities.

#### Collaboration and Governance

- Structurally support and value collaboration, interdisciplinarity, curricular flexibility, and shared governance.

#### Community Partnerships

- Develop cross-sector and community partnerships that address challenging issues, optimize resources, and serve the public good.

#### Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

- Become a national model for colleges committed to the values of equity, inclusion, and belonging.

#### Our Investments

- Determine and maintain an appropriate, sustainable size for our programs, structures, and associated resources at every level.

#### Employer of Choice

- Commit to being an employer of choice.

#### Campus Master Plan

- Advance the Campus Master Plan and improve space utilization to enhance the student experience and promote teaching and learning.

#### Our Future – An Ithaca Forever Community

- IC's alums are among our most valuable resources. We seek to build a community devoted to Ithaca Forever, sharing our talents and developing relationships and skills that will serve a lifetime of learning and growth.

## Annual Focus Areas

- Key aspects of the Ithaca Forever strategic plan have been prioritized during each academic year. To review the 2025-2026 priorities, please visit the link [here](#).

## Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Building and maintaining a more diverse and inclusive institution is a key element in Ithaca College's strategic plan. As part of this work, Ithaca College seeks to critically address and reduce all forms of prejudice, foster diversity, and reduce ethnocentrism and intolerance.

### Ithaca College's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement

To truly live our institutional commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion within this local context and within our broad national and global context demands that we – as a community and as a college – go beyond acknowledging systemic injustice and inequity. The creation of a more vibrant and inclusive future for all requires us to be courageous and tireless in crafting and implementing institutional policies that support our commitment and fully participate in rich, collaborative, and intersectional relationships and practices within our community that value authenticity and strengthen our shared humanity.

### Center for Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

The Center was created in 2023 to help advance the College's [Ithaca Forever strategic plan goal](#) of becoming a national model for colleges committed to the values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. Additionally, the Center for EIB provides a coordinated, strategic, and intentional direction for the institution, creating sustainable processes and support systems that build upon, learn from, and honor the long history of collective work that precedes this Center.

## Leadership

### La Jerne Terry Cornish, Ph.D., President



Dr. La Jerne Terry Cornish is the 10th president of Ithaca College. She took office on March 7, 2022. Prior to this appointment, Dr. Cornish served as Interim President from August 2021 to March 2022, and as Provost and Executive Vice President after joining IC as Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs in July 2018.

During her tenure at Ithaca, and in addition to leading the College's academic affairs division, Dr. Cornish served as the primary architect of [Ithaca Forever](#), the College's five-year strategic plan, along with Jason Freitag, Associate Professor in the Department of History. Cornish and Freitag worked with a 15-member steering committee composed of faculty, staff, students, and members of the Ithaca-area community. Formally endorsed by the Ithaca College Board of Trustees in June 2019, Ithaca Forever provides a blueprint for a sustainable future anchored by a commitment to inclusive, responsive, and student-centered action.

Throughout the tumultuous year of 2020 and into 2021, Dr. Cornish spearheaded the swift and significant shift to remote teaching and distance learning in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the orchestration of a revised academic calendar in alignment with and in compliance with ever-shifting safety and health guidelines. Dr. Cornish, partnering with IC's Vice President for Student Affairs and Campus Life, Rosanna Ferro, was instrumental in leading the work of the College's Return to Campus Task Force, which was charged with developing a nimble and comprehensive plan to fully open the Ithaca College campus in a challenging, public health environment.

During the pandemic, Dr. Cornish also accelerated the implementation of existing plans to thoughtfully and carefully prioritize the College's academic programs, resulting in a transformative slate of recommendations titled "The Shape of the College." The decisions resulting from the recommendations, augmented by similar work across divisions, enabled the College to weather the storm of the pandemic.

Dr. Cornish holds a doctorate in language, literacy, and culture from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County; a master of education with a concentration in urban and diverse learners from Goucher College; and a bachelor's degree in English, also from Goucher.

She has been a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, the first intercollegiate historically African American sorority, since 1984.

### **David Weil '87 MS '89, Senior Vice President for Strategic Services and Initiatives**



David serves as the Senior Vice President for Strategic Services and Initiatives and Chief Information Officer at Ithaca College.

He leads a portfolio of key institutional services and functions, including Human Resources, Information Technology, Analytics, and AI. His areas of responsibility span across talent management, benefits, employee relations, staff equity, inclusion, and belonging, artificial intelligence, process innovation, instructional design, institutional research, applications and infrastructure, IT support, and information security. He also provides executive leadership for cross-institutional strategic initiatives at the direction of the President. Recognized as a thoughtful strategic thinker, David is the 2024 recipient of the [EDUCAUSE Leadership Award](#) – EDUCAUSE's highest honor – celebrating his dedicated service and visionary leadership to the higher education technology community.

David is an active voice in national conversations about leadership, digital transformation, analytics, and artificial intelligence, with a focus on their potential to advance the mission of higher education. A frequent speaker at conferences, institutes, and webinars, he has authored numerous articles and contributed to discussions on these topics. His work has been featured in publications and programs sponsored by EDUCAUSE, Inside Higher Ed, The Chronicle of Higher Education, Campus Technology, Ed Tech Magazine, eCampus News, and others. In 2025, David was elected to serve as a member of the EDUCAUSE Board of Directors.

David played an instrumental role in developing the prestigious [EDUCAUSE Executive Leaders Academy](#), as well as the EDUCAUSE Senior Director Leadership Institute, and regularly serves as a faculty member in these and other professional development programs.

David holds a bachelor's degree in computer science and a master's degree in communications, both from Ithaca College.



## Ithaca, New York

Nestled in the heart of New York State's beautiful Finger Lakes region, halfway between Manhattan and Toronto, this thriving, culturally diverse city of 60,000 people is often recognized as a "best place to live." Home to Ithaca College, Cornell University, and Tompkins Cortland Community College, the Ithaca area attracts visitors, students, and scholars from around the globe. Ithaca offers natural beauty and urban sophistication. Rolling hills, breathtaking gorges, and splendid lakes offer countless outdoor activities.

[Ithaca, New York](#) is a thriving city full of art, culture, and festivals. Ranked as the best college town in the United States, Ithaca hosts tech startups, a "killer music scene," a Broadway-caliber theatre, and world-class restaurants, along with alumni-owned ice cream shops.

Residents and members of the Ithaca College community stay active by diving into Cayuga Lake, participating in water sports, hiking up rolling hills and down into glacier-carved gorges, and exploring woodlands. In the winter season, they cozy up in a local ski lodge after hitting the hills or trails. They enjoy local flavors at hundreds of restaurants, follow wine and beer trails along the shores of the Finger Lakes (or locally made sodas and ciders for those under 21), and find fresh ingredients to refine their culinary talents at the famed Ithaca farmer's market. They grow their artistic souls at galleries, museums, theatres, independent cinema, and underground music scenes.

Additional information about Ithaca College is available at [ithaca.edu](#). Information about the area surrounding the College can be found at the following websites:

- [www.LiveinIthaca.org](#)
- [Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance](#)
- [Ithaca Visitors Bureau](#)



## Procedure for Candidacy

All applications, nominations, and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a CV or resume and a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile.

WittKieffer is assisting Ithaca College in this search. For fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by March 1, 2026. The anticipated salary range for this role is \$180,000 - \$210,000.

Application materials should be submitted via email to [Ithaca-CHRO@wittkieffer.com](mailto:Ithaca-CHRO@wittkieffer.com).

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to:

Sandra Chu and Sarah Palmer

[Ithaca-CHRO@wittkieffer.com](mailto:Ithaca-CHRO@wittkieffer.com)

*The College recruits, hires, and promotes individuals based on their qualifications and performance. It is the policy of Ithaca College that discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, marital status, national origin, race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or military status will not exist in any activity, area, or operation of the College. Any inquiries concerning the application of Title IX may be made to Ithaca College's Title IX Coordinator, Linda Koenig, at 953 Danby Road, Ithaca, NY, 14850, (607) 274-7761, [lkoenig@ithaca.edu](mailto:lkoenig@ithaca.edu), or to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights. For more information on the Office of Civil Rights, please visit <https://www.ed.gov/about/ed-offices/ocr>.*